DEVELOPING MEDIATION SKILLS BY TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH LITERATURE

Svetlana Dimitrova-Gyuzeleva
New Bulgarian University

Abstract: *The Companion Volume to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (2020) has not only enriched our understanding of the essence of communicative competence, but also underlined the key role of developing mediation skills when teaching and learning a foreign language. The main implication of this new conceptual understanding for our work as language teachers involves adopting a more functional, pro-active approach to the teaching of the target language which goes beyond the traditional practice of the four skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing) for their own sake, zooming in on what learners can actually do with the acquired linguistic competence when they communicate in a variety of contexts, constructing and conveying meaning multimodally, through all channels of communication (verbal, visual, auditory, kinesthetic), i.e. the focus is now on the four modes of communication: reception, production, interaction and mediation.

The present paper briefly outlines the content of this new component of the foreign language communicative competence construct (i.e. mediation) and goes on to illustrate the potential of using literary texts in the language classroom to develop learners' mediation skills, thus adding one more aspect to the rich affordance of literature as a resource in language learning alongside the enhancement of students' multimodal literacy.

Keywords: foreign language communicative competence, mediation skills, teaching English through literature

Theoretical framework

Today we are witnessing a major change in the way we communicate, which has brought about a corresponding change in our understanding of literacy and the nature of communicative competence, as well as in our concept of cognition and how it happens, how we improve our communication skills (Kress, 2003; Dimitrova-Gjuzeleva, 2013; Lim & Tan-Chia, 2022; Donaghy, Karastathi & Peachey, 2023). In our digital age, there is much more to literacy than knowing the foreign language (its grammar rules and vocabulary and how to use them appropriately) and communication is increasingly multimodal in nature, not just verbal/linguistic (speaking and writing), but incorporating and combining multiple modes of communication in addition to the linear alphabetic text: visual (e.g. still and moving images, illustrations, visual design, signs, and symbols), aural (e.g. audio and sound representations, voice features, sound effects, music, background noise, and even silence), gestural (e.g. body language, face

expression, gestures, movement), and spatial (e.g. positioning and spacing, structural organization, physical layout of a text, space between interlocutors) (Donaghy, Karastathi & Peachey, 2023, p. 8). The change in the nature of communication has brought about a change in the nature of learning, too. Even in the acquisition of literacy and the enhancement of communicative competence in our mother tongue, traditional alphabet textbooks (*буквари*) are complemented by more multimodal readers, which provoke the curiosity of young learners, nourish their love for reading and motivate them to learn, enriching in the process not only their language knowledge and skills, but also their general cognitive competence and creativity, as well as their emotional and social intelligence. An excellent example of that type of reader is Sylvia Yordanova's alphabet textbook "Where does the Wind Live"(*„Къде живее вятърът"*, published under the penname Anabel Hihil[1]), in which learners join the dog Ray in his mesmerizing adventures and exciting journey across the world in search of the wind's home, while learning to read and write, solving puzzles and playing, acting, drawing and singing[2].

In other words, today more than ever in order to communicate effectively, to utilize linguistic competence to its full extent in successful communicative performance, people need to possess multiple literacies which go far beyond the concept of literacy as solely knowledge of language (how to read and write alphabetic texts). Contemporary texts, which reflect the change in our communication practices, are themselves very often multimodal in character[3]: meaning is constructed and conveyed through a combination of modes, such as text, audio, images and video. So, to understand and appreciate them fully, to be able to create meaning in a similar multifaceted way and achieve our communicative purposes in real life, we need to acquire and develop multimodal literacy (Lim & Tan-Chia, 2022, p. 38). The construct of contemporary communicative competence should "integrate the skills of viewing (the process of comprehending and responding to multimodal texts) and representing (the process of communicating information and ideas through the creation of multimodal texts) alongside listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills" (Donaghy, Karastathi & Peachey, 2023, p. 5).

The good news is that young people, our foreign language learners, are already digital natives and they are usually quite competent in dealing with multimodal texts in their mother tongue – i.e. they can "comprehend, respond to, and compose meaning through multimodal texts in diverse forms ... for effective communication in their private, social, academic and work lives" (*ibid.*) – so the journey to mastering multimodal literacy in the foreign language need not start

from scratch. Language teachers should maximize on this learner potential and facilitate the transfer of these competences to the new language milieu by stimulating learner agency (Larsen-Freeman, Driver, Gao & Mercer, 2021) and providing opportunities for the students to exercise and enhance their multimodal communicative competence in a challenging and engaging way, so that they can feel a sense of ownership and control over their own learning and become motivated not only to learn in the classroom, but develop the autonomy to carry on with the learning process in real-life communicative settings (*ibid*., p. 2).

The Companion Volume to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2020) has attempted to reflect this major change in our understanding of the essence of communicative competence, zooming in on 'languaging' (*ibid*., pp. 34–36) or language performance, i.e. on what learners can actually do with the acquired linguistic competence when they communicate in a variety of contexts, constructing and conveying meaning multimodally, through all channels of communication (verbal, visual, auditory, kinesthetic). This conceptual shift towards the parameters of language behavior has led scholars to revise the construct of communicative competence, going beyond the definition of the four skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) as its major constituents, and focusing more on the four modes of communication: reception, production, interaction, and mediation (Fig. 1).

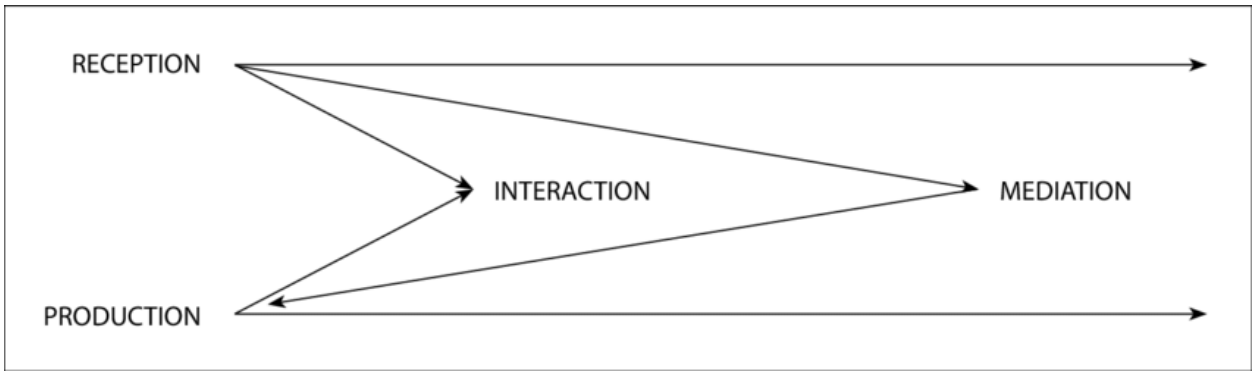

Figure 1. The relationship between reception, production, interaction, and mediation (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 34)

The traditional four skills are encompassed in the categories of *perception* and *production*, both of which could be either spoken (listening/watching and speaking) or written (reading and writing). *Interaction*, which emphasizes the social use of the language and the role of communicative context (i.e. when we directly engage in communication with others, during a conversation or discussion, or in some form of correspondence or online transaction), "involves

both reception and production, but is more than the sum of those parts"(Council of Europe, 2020, p. 34), as in the process of languaging we need to mobilize all our resources (cognitive, emotional, [pluri-]linguistic, and [pluri-]cultural), to capitalizeon our sociolinguistic awareness and pragmatic competences and to activate various interaction strategies in order to exert our social agency and achieve our communicative goals (North, 2022a). Unlike interaction, "where new content is created in response to something that has just been heard, read or seen" (Cambridge English, 2022, p. 3), *mediation* is often about modifying the same written or oral content so as to suit a different context or bridge a gap in the conversation, which was created by the specific conditions and constraints imposed by the socio-cultural context in which the communication takes place (North, 2022a). The concept of mediation was introduced in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (*CEFR*) back in 2001 as follows:

> In both the receptive and productive modes, the written and/or oral activities of mediation make communication possible between persons who are unable, for whatever reason, to communicate with each other directly. Translationor interpretation, a paraphrase, summary or record, provides for a third party a (re)formulation of a source text to which this third party does not have direct access. Mediation language activities – (re)processing an existing text – occupy an important place in the normal linguistic functioning of our societies. (Council of Europe, 2001, Section 2.1.3)

However, in the *CEFR* of 2001, the concept of mediation was not developed to its full potential (its interpretation was only confined to what an intermediary does when the interlocutors are unable to understand each other directly – i.e. to mediating a text or mediating communication) and there were no descriptors for it. The *Companion Volume to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2020) takes a step forward in defining mediation as a key component of communicative competence, which combines reception, production, and interaction activities to ensure the success of the communication:

> In mediation, the user/learner acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning, sometimes within the same language, sometimes across modalities (e.g. from spoken to signed or vice versa, in cross-modal communication) and sometimes from one language to another (cross-linguistic mediation). The focus is on the role of language in processes like creating the space and conditions for communicating and/or learning, collaborating to construct new meaning, encouraging others to construct

or understand new meaning, and passing on new information in an appropriate form. The context can be social, pedagogic, cultural, linguistic or professional. (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 90)

In the *CEFR Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2020), the construct of mediation is decomposed into its building blocks (mediation activities, relating to *mediating concepts*, *mediating communication*, or *mediating a text*, and mediation strategies) and validated descriptors are provided for each of the components, scaled from level pre-A1 to C2, in the familiar format of *Can do* statements.

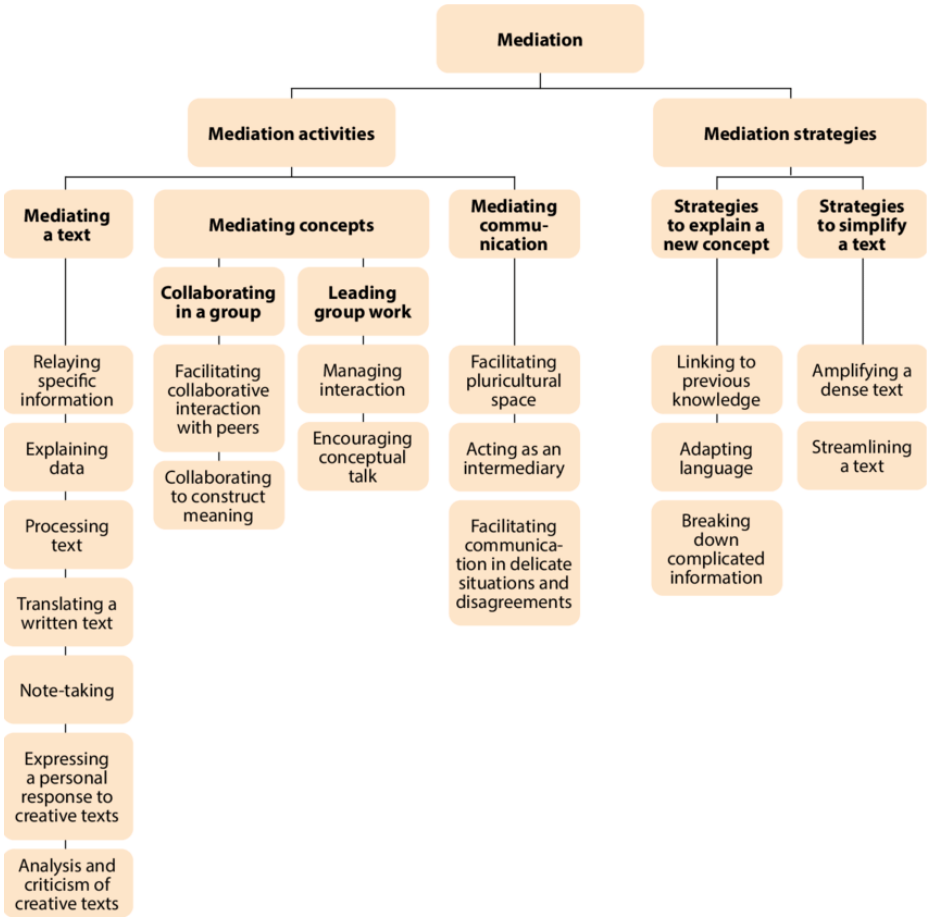

Figure 2. Mediation activities and strategies (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 90)

Mediating a text "involves passing on to another person the content of a text to which they do not have access, often because of linguistic, cultural, semantic or technical barriers" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 91) – for instance translating a text from one language to another, but also describing verbally or interpreting graphically represented data (in the same language); notably, this skill also includes mediating a text for oneself (e.g. a student taking notes during a

lecture or summarizing the contents of an article to include in a term paper) or such activities as expressing reactions to creative and literary texts or retelling a story from a different point of view (to display an understanding of a certain character for example).

Mediating concepts "refers to the process of facilitating access to knowledge and concepts for others, particularly if they may be unable to access this directly on their own. This is a fundamental aspect of parenting, mentoring, teaching and training, but also of collaborative learning and work" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 91). In other words, mediating concepts presupposes thinking things through together (e.g. CLIL content or cultural stereotypes) and cooperating with others to effectively share ideas and create meaning together. This skill is especially needed for effective team work when learners or colleagues work on group projects, negotiating meaning, refining the understanding of concepts through discussion and explanation, providing constructive feedback on each other's ideas, suggestions, and solutions, collaboratively planning the needed steps to achieve their communicative goals and contributing to the creation of a joint product, ensuring the contribution and equal participation of all group members.

Finally, *mediating communication*is concerned with regulating personal encounters in which the mediator "aims to facilitate understanding and shape successful communication between users/learners who may have individual, sociocultural, sociolinguistic or intellectual differences in standpoint" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 91). It requires cultural sensitivity and willingness to accept and acknowledge different behaviors and ways of thinking, ability to understand disagreements between parties involved in the communication, showing respect for cultural differences and the capacity to interpret and discuss them constructively, and, last but not least, skills to negotiate mutual understandingand avoid potential conflict/misunderstanding or facilitate the reaching of an acceptable resolution. This skill is most directly linked with plurilingual and pluricultural communicative competence, for which the *CEFR Companion Volume* also provides detailed descriptors (Council of Europe, 2020, pp. 123–128).

In order to effectively cope with the mediation activities, one needs to apply a wide range of *mediation strategies*, classified in two major categories: strategies to explain a new concept (*ibid*., pp. 118–120) and strategies to simplify a text (*ibid*., pp. 121–122)[4]. The first set includes *linking the new concept to previous knowledge* (which presupposes activating prior knowledge and existing schemata in the process of its interpretation), *adapting the language in which the*

concept is presented in order to understand it better (usually done by paraphrasing and explaining), and *the breaking down of complicated information* (which is related to clarifying the new concept by identifying its main points or outlining its component structure). The second set of strategies includes *amplifying a dense text*, thus enabling its understanding by paraphrasing, modifying its style and/or giving examples, and *streamlining a text*, which refers to highlighting relevant points and excluding irrelevant ones.

From the description of mediation in the *CEFR Companion Volume* it becomes clear that it involves various skills, strategies, and activities, linked to the other three modes of communicative behavior, i.e. "mediation combines reception, production and interaction" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 35). In the words of Brian North (2022a, p. 22), mediation is "the pivot of a holistic, ecological view of language use and learning", since mediation allows for creating an inviting plurilingual/pluricultural space conductive to communication and learning, reducing affective blocks and tensions, building bridges towards the new/the other and passing on information effectively or (co-)constructing new meaning/knowledge. Mediation spans across languages and cultures, bringing them closer together; it spans across media and modalities, scaffolding communication and making understanding possible regardless of the milieu; it even spans across worlds, embracing reading as a leisure activity and provoking the critical response, emotional reaction, and the imagination of the recipient (North, 2022a, p. 21). What is more, mediation requires critical thinking and higher order cognitive skills, such as analysis, application, evaluation, and synthesis (Bloom, 1956), which makes it one of the most complex and essential communicative skills.

The concept of mediation as part of communicative competence and real-life language behavior emphasizes "the two key notions of co-construction of meaning in interaction and constant movement between the individual and social level in language learning and language use", as well as the vision of the user/learner as "a social agent" (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 36). In addition to cross-linguistic mediation, "it also encompasses mediation related to communication and learning, as well as social and cultural mediation. This wider approach has been taken because of its relevance in increasingly diverse classrooms, ... and because mediation is increasingly seen as a part of all learning, especially of all language learning" (*ibid*.). Thus, the description of mediation in the *CEFR Companion Volume* underlines its key position in the action-oriented approach to language learning. "The mediation descriptors are particularly

relevant for the classroom in connection with small group, collaborative tasks. The tasks can be organized in such a way that learners have to share different inputs, explaining their information and working together in order to achieve a goal" (*ibid.*, p. 36).

Enrica Piccardo and Brian North (2019) argue that an action-oriented approach to language learning is rooted in a constructivist paradigm of language acquisition where learners are involved in genuine, real-life communicative practices, i.e. they do things with the language, not just memorize and repeat things (such as vocabulary items, grammar structures, pronunciation patterns, etc.). It epitomizes the dynamic vision of language education (Piccardo & North, 2019). According to Brian North (2022a/b), the action-orientation to language learning presupposes engaging students in purposeful, collaborative tasks that integrate the different modes of communicative behavior (reception, production, interaction, and mediation) in the achievement of real-life communicative goals and that (a) allow students' initiative, so that "learners can purposefully and strategically exert their agency[5]"; (b) have a "defined mission for the learners" (i.e. they often require learners to createsome kind of product, an artefact); (c) require co-construction of meaning through mediation in interaction with other learners; (d) set communicative conditions and/or constraints (i.e. define the communicative context and outline the task to be performed, the challenge to be overcome or the problem to be solved); and (e) specify 'language policy' (i.e. when to "plurilanguage", when to use one language or another) (North, 2022a, p. 11). Thus "knowledge is constructed socially in the classroom as learners work with one another ... learners from different backgrounds and experiences bringing multiple perspectives into the classroom" (Lim & Tan-Chia, 2022, p. 26) that could be capitalized on in the production stage of the integrated task, enhancing the quality of the task outcome / the produced artefacts.

Action-orientation to developing mediation skills would involve using the language (or sometimes 'plurilanguaging') in order to complete an integrated task through collaborative group work (North, 2022a/b). It presupposes the simulation of genuine, real-life communicative scenarios and requires the use of "relevant authentic materials creatively", as well as the application of various mediation strategies for successfully achieving the communicative goal (North, 2022a, p. 31). Task completion would probably involve the following stages[6]:

- collaborating with team members (interaction) to mediate main concepts and make sense of the task, as well as to plan the steps to facilitate collaborative interaction with peers for completing the task;
- doing some research, which would involve reading or watching / listening to some authentic materials (reception) to make sense / mediate content for oneself (this would require the application of the *skills of viewing*, i.e. comprehending and responding to multimodal texts (Donaghy, Karastathi & Peachey, 2023));
- collaborating with team members (interaction) to mediate acquired content and refine the understanding of concepts through group discussion and explanation, providing constructive feedback on other team members' ideas and suggestions and piecing together individual contributions;
- creating artefacts (e.g. a multimedia presentation /a book-review/ a sketch script and dramatization, a short video, etc.), which would predominantly require production and interaction skills, or the *skills of representing* (i.e. communicating information and ideas through the creation of multimodal texts (Donaghy, Karastathi & Peachey, 2023)).

When considering the potential of using literary texts in the language classroom (i.e. using fiction as an example of 'authentic material'), Victor Lim and Lydia Tan-Chia's (2022) methodological framework for multimodal learning processes might be better suited. It encompasses four stages: encountering, exploring, evaluating and expressing. *Encountering* focuses on the emotional engagement of the learners. Teachers provide for the "encounter" of the learners with the authentic text (e.g. ask them to read a text or watch a movie based on it) and encourage them to retell it in their own words, describing their initial reaction to the content and sharing their emotional response to it. The *exploring* stage is related to the cognitive understanding of the text. Learners try to identify evidence from the text to support their interpretation of its content. The learning process of exploring can be both guided by the teacher or the learners can take the initiative and navigate the text, exploring text meaning(s) amongst themselves (teachers still monitor their performance and offer constructive feedback on the learning process and/or summarize the understanding of the text with the whole class at the end). During *evaluating* the focus is on critical perspectives: learners move from just describing and interpreting to critically analyzing and evaluating the text and the author's message, which again can be done individually or in a group. The final stage of *expressing* engages learners in

meaning-making and is an outlet for their creativity and imagination, sparked off by the text. It allows for the production of a multimodal artefact, expressing their individual interpretation of the content and its significance. This model is well in tune with the action approach to language learning as advocated in the *CEFR* (Council of Europe, 2001 and 2020). "Through these processes, teachers are able to design more well-rounded multimodal learning experiences. These reflect the importance not only of thinking but also of feeling and doing in learning" (Donaghy, Karastathi & Peachey, 2023, p. 21). The same applies to "languaging", i.e. effective language behavior is the result of the synergy between the cognitive and the emotional, between competence and performance.

Finally, some words about the benefits of using literature (literature with small 'l', going beyond the classical 'canonical' texts by renowned authors, also encompassing the works of contemporary writers from a diverse range of cultures and literary schools using English as their means of expression, even song lyrics, comics or film scripts (see McRae, 1994) in the language classroom. As it has often been pointed out (Dimitrova-Gyuzeleva, 2019), literary texts may serve as a rich source of contextualized authentic language material for the students to improve their communicative competence (linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic); additionally, skilled reading comprehension of a literary text requires the fine coordination of text with context in a way that goes far beyond simply chaining together the meanings of a string of decoded words. Literary texts also offer ample opportunities to learners to improve their language skills (not only reading) in an integrated way, e.g. by reacting to the content and/or the aesthetic impact of the literary text, deciphering and (critically) reflecting on the author's message, reviewing and evaluating, expressing their own ideas and opinions on the topic and sharing relevant personal experience, using the text as a springboard for their own productive creativity. Literary texts are also a window to the culture of the target language through which learners develop a better understanding of "otherness" and enhance their intercultural competence, as well as their awareness of their own cultural identity. Last but not least, they are a powerful motivator for the learners to communicate on topics which interest them and/or they can relate to, involving them personally and engaging them emotionally; literary texts put language learners in touch with the real world – a connection which the 'sanitized' content of global language coursebooks can hardly make (Gray, 2002). Literary texts are open to interpretation – meaning does not reside solely in the text, but it is constructed in the mind of the reader and the text functions only as a

canvas onto which the reader projects whatever his or her reactions may be, i.e. they prompt learners to exert their agency.

Some practical implications

Here are some examples of action-oriented task snippets based on literary texts aiming at developing learners' mediation skills:

- *Do some research on ... / Google it!* (e.g. What is "Fahrenheit 451" and why is it so significant in Ray Bradbury's novel? || Where does the title of the novel "The Catcher in the Rye" come from? || Where does the title of the novel "To Kill a Mockingbird" come from and what are the symbolic associations of this bird in the book? Is this the only novel by Harper Lee? || What else [apart from "The Picture of Dorian Gray"] did Oscar Wilde write? What is "The Nightingale" about? What does the bird stand for there?);
- *Discuss with your friends about it and tell me what they think of ...* (e.g. the Great Gatsby – do they empathize with him? Why is he 'great'?);
- *Individual creative projects* (e.g. modifying the ending of a story, or retelling a story changing the point of view and/or the narrator, or creating a poem or a song starting from the ideas / themes of the literary text and performing it);
- *Cooperative creative projects* (e.g. selecting a short fragment from a book and discussing its significance in the plot, followed by its dramatization or multimodal presentation building on team members' non-linguistic skills such as drawing, graphic design, script writing, photography, video recording, music composing, acting, etc.[7]).

Here is a possible procedure for dealing with a single literary text (the text used is an adapted version of O. Henry's short story "Witches' Loaves") in the language classroom aiming at developing learners' communicative competence (students should be at B2 level or above). An action-oriented approach (AoA) is adopted in the tasks and the focus is on improving students' mediation skills (the latter are highlighted in the second column of the table).

Stages of the activity	**Mediation skills practiced (formulated as "Can do" statements)**
<u>Pre-reading tasks</u>	
– presenting O. Henry's life and works (a pre-assigned individual project)	[AoA stage] doing some research, involving reading authentic materials (reception) to make sense / mediate content for oneself and others [mediation skills] *Can give a critical appraisal of creative /*

	literary works of different periods and genres (e.g. novels, poems, and plays)
– group discussion of title associations, predicting the content of the story judging by the title ("Witches' Loaves")	[AoA stage] collaborating with team members (interaction) to mediate the understanding of concepts through group discussion and explanation [mediation skills] *Can recognize the subtleties of nuanced language, rhetorical effect and stylistic language use (e.g. metaphors, abnormal syntax, ambiguity), interpreting and "unpacking" meanings and connotations*
<u>Reading tasks</u>	
– skim-reading the story to see if predictions are correct and to add additional nuances to the interpretation of the title (i.e. why the author chose this title for the story)	[AoA stage] reading the authentic material (reception) to make sense / mediate content for oneself [mediation skills] *Can critically evaluate the way in which structure, language, and rhetorical devices are exploited in a work for a particular purpose and give a reasoned argument concerning their appropriateness and effectiveness*
– reading the story for detailed understanding of the text (doing a multiple choice comprehension task)	[AoA stage] reading the authentic material (reception) to make sense / mediate content for oneself [mediation skills] *Can exploit information and arguments from a complex text to discuss a topic, glossing with evaluative comments, etc.* *Can explain the attitude or opinion expressed in a source text on a topic, supporting inferences they make with reference to specific passages in the original*
<u>Post-reading tasks</u>	
– discussing a topic related to the content of the text – e.g. *women (marriage) now and then*	[AoA stage] collaborating with team members (interaction) to mediate acquired content and refine the understanding of concepts through group discussion and explanation, providing constructive feedback on other team members' ideas and suggestions [mediation skills] *Can explain inferences when links or implications are not made explicit, and point out the sociocultural implications of the form of expression (e.g. understatement, irony, sarcasm)* *Can describe in detail their personal interpretation of a work, outlining their reactions to certain features / aspects (characters, plot, style, etc.) and explaining their significance*
– retelling the story from Miss Martha's or Mr. Blumberger's point of view	[AoA stage] creating artefacts, predominantly requiring production skills [mediation skills] *Can outline a personal interpretation of a character in a work: their psychological / emotional state, the motives for their actions and the consequences of these actions*
– dramatizing [a fragment from] the story (incl. writing the sketch script)	[AoA stage] creating artefacts, predominantly requiring production and interaction skills [mediation skills] *Can stimulate discussion on how to organize collaborative work to achieve goals* *Can convey clearly and fluently in well-structured language*

	the significant ideas in long, complex texts, including evaluative aspects and nuances
– translating [a passage from] the story	[AoA stage] creating artefacts, predominantly requiring production skills [mediation skills] *Can provide fluent translation of complex texts on a wide range of topics, capturing most nuances*

Table 1. Action-oriented task stages and mediation skills practiced

Conclusion

The CEFR Companion Volume (2020) has not only enriched our understanding of the essence of communicative competence, but also highlighted the importance of developing learners' mediation skills when teaching a foreign language. The main implication of this new conceptual understanding for our work as language teachers involves adopting a more active approach to the teaching of the target language which goes beyond the traditional practice of the four skills for their own sake, zooming in on what learners can actually do with the acquired linguistic competence when they use the language in a variety of communicative contexts. The present paper attempted to illustrate the rich affordance of literary texts as an authentic resource in the foreign language classroom for developing learners' mediation skills and strategies.

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[1] The book is inspired by the principles of Suggestopedia and the author herself is one of the most ardent disciples of professor Georgi Lozanov.

[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWHhmDCv9ps&t=2s

[3] Traditional novels are a notable exception.

[4] The *CEFR Companion Volume* provides detailed descriptors, scaled pre-A1 to C2, for all of the mediation strategies (Council of Europe, 2020, pp. 118–122).

[5] Learner agency refers to the feeling of ownership and control that learners have over their own learning, which allows them to become more confident, engaged and effective in the process of learning (Larsen-Freeman, Driver, Gao & Mercer, 2021).

[6] These stages are loosely based on Brain North's (2022a) methodological framework for mediation tasks.

[7] This endeavor might be a bit challenging to complete in the mainstream language classroom, but it is always worth providing learners with the opportunity to show their understanding of a text and language knowledge in a way which they feel confident about (choosing their modality of expression) and through which they can display their strengths. At a recent language competition when challenged to read a book ("The Book Thief" by Markus Zusak) and show their understanding of the author's message by creating a multimedia presentation, a team of teenagers got together and produced an animated motion graphics video based on a fragment of the story, retold by one of the characters in the book (Max, the Jew); this also involved modifying the original text by scripting the lines of Max to be used in the video, composing the accompanying music and playing it (there was a skilled pianist in the group), as well as staging a brief live performance – at an appropriate moment during the video – by one of the students (an emotional account of Max's experience in the concentration camp).